

**MONSTERLAND**

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**JUNE 1996 NUMBER 10**

**TOBE  
HOOPER**  
DIRECTOR  
FROM MARS

**BIG  
TROUBLE  
IN LITTLE  
CHINA**

**EMPIRE**  
THE NEW  
FRIGHT  
FACTORY

**THE HOUSE**  
THAT DRIPPED  
BLOOD!!!

**SNEAK PEAK**  
**GEORGE LUCAS'**  
**LABYRINTH**

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## EDITORIAL

This is Evila, back again and ready to party in another monster bash. Since I've moved in, Forry has moved on—to my dungeon! The magazine started out as his brainchild—but how it's my goonchild to do with as I please! So, dear readers, you are left helpless in my clutches... I'll still

offer up the latest feast of monsterramas and other horrors from days of yore when giants stalked Hollywood, such terror titans as Karloff, Lugosi, Chaney, Lorne and the like. I know my roots—and some of them are in Hades! Scream out what you want to see us unveil between the covers and we may be in a rare kind moment and comply. Why just this issue one of your FrightFleets is demanding a spread on *The Attack of the 50 Feet Woman* and its overrated heroine—how you could want to see her when I'm lurking about—Some have already asked to view my visage—and I may comply. Or I may not.

Wait and see!—

*Evila*

# MONSTER



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28

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51

HAL SCHUSTER  
PUBLISHER

JAMES VAN HISE  
EDITOR

ROBERT LEWIS  
PROD. MGR.

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*LOCAL DEMON*

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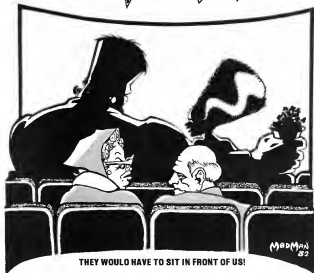
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# FANTASY FILMARQUEE



THEY WOULD HAVE TO SIT IN FRONT OF US!

*Evils here—Due to the incredibly busy terror schedule of fear flicks filling Horrorwood, I'll skip my cutting comments and turn you directly over to our reporter, but next time...*

## ALIEN BLUES

Everything has not been happy on the set of *Alien*, 20th Century Fox's sequel to their 1979 hit *Alien*. Sigourney Weaver (who is reportedly giving few interviews and staying away from scenes with blood) recreates the central role of Ripley, discovered drifting through deep space 57 years after her climactic battle aboard the *Nostromo*, and the new film ends with a spectacular battle. Director of photography Dick Bush was replaced by Ridley Scott protégé Adrian Biddle by mutual

agreement with director James Cameron, and American actor James Remar (48 *House*) was sent home when the director would not tolerate what he deemed "undisciplined behavior." Producer Gale Anne Hurd and Cameron have also severely limited the number of interviews they are prepared to give. *Alien* features Michael Biehn, Paul Reiser and Lance Henriksen.

## KING OF HEARTS

Obviously Dino DeLaurentiis doesn't learn by his mistakes. He has actually had the audacity to make a sequel to his

1976 bomb *King Kong*! The follow-up, at one time titled *King Kong in Moscow*, has the giant ape getting a heart transplant(!) and returning to the jungle where he meets Queen Kong. In the end he dies (again) and Mrs Kong stomps off into the sunset with Kong, Jr. Perhaps DeLaurentiis will be able to buy himself another Oscar with this one?

## STEPHEN KING'S GRAVEYARD

Tom Savini, master of make-up and special effects for George Romero and numerous horror classics such as *Friday The 13th* will direct *Graveyard Shift*,

based on the Stephen King short story. It will be Savini's feature film debut as a director, although he has directed several episodes for the syndicated television series *Teles From The Darkside*.

The film is being made by Brimstone Productions, Inc., a Pittsburgh-based motion picture company with headquarters in McKeesport. George Demick, the company's founder, said he is optimistic about completing pre-production in late '86 with a target date for shooting to begin in spring '87.

Screenwriter John Esposito is nearing completion of the story draft under the sanctioned approval of King. "Steve has always suggested to me that the setting for the film might be Maine," Demick says. "I'd certainly prefer to bring the production into my own backyard."

## CLIVE BARKER'S FILMS OF BLOOD

Horror writer Clive Barker, whose series of six British paperbacks *The Books Of Blood* have already made him a major figure in the field, is already having his work adapted into films even before his writing appears in paperback in the U.S. this spring.

In January, Empire Entertainment acquired the distribution rights to Clive Barker's much troubled *Underworld*. Directed by George Pánuik and starring Denholm Elliott, there is already talk of reinstating some of the more gruesome sequences, left on the cutting room floor by the film's producers.

Dublin-based Paradise Pictures has teamed up with Alpine Pictures and Green Man Productions to film *Rawhead*, scripted by Barker and based on his harrowing short story "Rawhead Rex" about an ancient monster ravaging the British countryside. Filming began in Ireland on Feb. 17th and George Pánuik, who helmed *Underworld*, once again directs. Barker, who is known to be unhappy with the way *Underworld* turned out, is having nothing to do with the new film, and instead is set to make his debut as a director on an original horror film of his own this summer.

## LOVE AT SECOND BITE

The often announced sequel to George Hamilton's 1978 hit vampire spoof, *Love At First Bite*, looks set to role again. Now titled *Love At Second Bite: Dracula Comes To Hollywood*, original screenwriter Robert Kaufman will again write the script. This time Hamilton's suave Dracula finds himself involved with health clubs, the movie business and Californian weirdos who

make blood-sucking seem like kid's stuff. It is hoped that director Stan Dragoti and co-star Susan Saint James will also return for the follow-up.

## FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR

The on-again, off-again science fiction film *The Navigator* is rolling and completed 3 weeks of location shooting in Oslo, Norway. The film went there after completing shooting in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Location in Norway required overseas transport of a 20 by 40 foot section of spacecraft as well as director Randal Kleiser and an American cast and crew of 27 people. The now titled *Flight of the Navigator* is a \$17 million film slated for release by Buena Vista.

## SUPERMAN IV

It's official, the Cannon Films production of the fourth film in the modern *Superman* series will feature Christopher Reeve. Reeve had been reportedly holding out until he saw the screenplay. Film is slated for a summer of '87 release.

## TEEN WOLF II

Last summer's surprise boxoffice hit will spawn a sequel for 1987 release from Atlantic Releasing. Also due from Atlantic is *Monster Mash*.

## KENTUCKY FRIED SEQUEL

John Landis is doing an anthology-type comedy in the vein of his second film, *Kentucky Fried Movie*, of a decade ago. Each segment is being done by a different director, including such luminaries as Joe Dante, who's already finished his shooting. Title of one of the film's segs is "Amazing Women On The Moon." Landis has reportedly been offering \$500 to anyone who comes up with a good title for the wild montage.

## THE UNCUT LOST HORIZON

Footage missing from the classic 1937 fantasy *Lost Horizons* was recently unearthed. Originally released at 132 minutes, film was cut to 107 in 1942 and then cut to 90 minutes for television release. New footage almost completely restores film to its original length where it will screen at film festivals and in a limited theatrical release. Home video should not be far behind.

## THE UNCUT FRANKENSTEIN

The long discussed (and near legendary) lost scenes from the original

Boris Karloff *Frankenstein* have been discovered. This includes the scene in which the monster throws a little girl into a lake where she drowns. This uncut version will soon be released on MCA Home Video.

## FRANK HERBERT DEAD AT 65

Popular science fiction author Frank Herbert, creator of the *Dune* saga and many other books, died Feb. 12, 1986 of cancer.

A former journalist, Herbert's first novel was *Under Pressure* (aka *Dragon In The Sea*). His epic of a messiah on a desert world, *Dune*, has sold over 12 million copies since its publication 20 years ago. It was initially rejected by 20 publishers and the scarce first hardcover printing is highly sought-after.

*Dune* became a motion picture in 1984 which drew only fair boxoffice response and mixed reviews. Herbert recently sold film rights to his novel *The Green Beret*. He was collaborating on a new *Dune* novel with his son at the time of the author's death. Herbert's son will complete the book.

## \* SHORT TAKES \*

□ *Mad Max* director George Miller will direct his first American feature, *The Witches of Eastwick*, based on the novel by John Updike.

□ Les Thompson, Jeffrey Jones and Tim Robbins star in the Universal/Lucasfilm production *Howard The Duck*, based on the Marvel Comics character. Directed by Willard Huyck, film is slated for a summer '86 release.

□ Arnold Schwarzenegger is asking \$3.5 million to appear in 20th Century Fox's *Hunter*, in which Arnold would get to fight an alien!

□ Wes (Nightmare on Elm Street) Craven is upset because his tv movie interview with *A Vampire* (based on the book by Anne Rice) was cancelled when the budget went to \$6 million instead of the \$5 allocated!

□ Skour Pictures' *Star Crystal* is described as combining "the chilling horror of *Alien* and the charm of *E.T.*" C. Justin Campbell, Faye Bolt and John Smith star.

□ Joseph Levine plans to shoot *The Glow* in New York.

□ Beware of a film *The Monterey Movie Company* is pushing in America as *Beady Secretary* ("closed down by Spanish police during its first week of production, and later banned from continued production in Spain"). It is, in fact, Jess Franco's dire 1968 'epic' *Marquise De Sade's Justice*, starring Jack Palance, Akim Tamiroff and Klaus Kinski.





SCARE  
MAIL

THE LETTER  
HORRORWOOD  
KARLOFFORNIA



SCARE  
MAIL

Dear Monsterland,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your fantastic article on Elvira in issue 7. It really told me everything I wanted to know about the beautiful, sexy and thoroughly funny Mistress Of The Dark. In addition to being the most beautiful and talented woman on tv today, Elvira is rapidly becoming a true American institution!

Seeing Elvira in person at the Weekend Of Horrors in Los Angeles back in November was by all means one of the major thrills of my entire life! She was lovely and hilarious as ever and the way she answered all the questions put to her (where she got the dagger in her belt, what was the worst movie she ever aired on tv, whether or not she's dating Pee Wee Herman) was truly wonderful and then some! (Hey, Elvira's not dating Pee Wee because I'm dating Pee Wee and I never share my delicacies—Elvira!) I was really overjoyed to learn that she's planning to star in her very own 3-D movie!! Seeing the Vincent Price classic *The Mad Magician* in full, glorious 3-D on Movie Macabre back in May of '82 was far out enough, but to see Elvira in 3-D on the movie screen—well, suffice it to say that would be true ecstasy for all true Elvira fans—and a surefire box office hit which could even rival *Back To The Future* and *Star Wars*!!! (Is America really ready for Elvira's plunging neckline in 3-D?—Elvira!)

Elvira, my soft, lovely, funny lady, I predict that 1986 will be your year to really show the whole world how wonderful you really are, and then some!!!

Roger Hurst  
505 N. Kenwood St.  
Glendale, CA 91208

Dear Monsterland,

So far I've not seen much evidence (in either *Fearless Monsters* or *Monsterland*) of perhaps the sexiest, yet unfortunately most obscure behemoth of them all: *The Fifty Foot Woman*. Her name, for those of you who don't know, is Allison Hayes, and she happened to get the lead role in the seldom heard of *Attack Of The Fifty Foot Woman*. So it wasn't the greatest science fiction film ever made. O.K., maybe it was even a bomb. But it wasn't because Ms. Hayes didn't look great as the titan of terror.

I know your publication deals primarily with grotesque beasts, (I could make a great pun off of that line, but I got class—Elvira!) but I ask of you now, I beg of you, do a profile on Allison Hayes, from her films *The Disembodied* (Allied Artists, 1957), *The Unspeakable* (Republic, 1957), *The Undead* (AIP, 1958) to her biggest role of them all, the 50 foot plantess. So far, all of the publicity shots have been of Allison's rubber, enlarged hand. (As opposed to her rubber, enlarged . . . No. No. No. Stop me before I pun again—Elvira!) If you could obtain some rare scenes of her destroying her town, I would be very appreciative. I'm sorry if I seem so demanding, but I think 28 years is long enough for a fifty foot woman fan to wait to see a profile on his beloved actress.

Jason Strangis  
2301 St. Anthony Pkwy.  
Mpls., MN 55418

I've never gotten a letter from a 50 foot fan before but this sounds like a challenge to our crafty crew of researchers. We'll see what we can dig up and don't be surprised if they pull it off, no pun intended, of course —Elvira!



Dear Monsterland,

I would like to discuss Mr. Rhodes' letter in the February 1986 issue. Obviously, Mr. Rhodes is a Lugosi fan. And I cannot blame him. Lugosi was great—in his own way. But Mr. Rhodes' perception of Lugosi is strange, if not sad.

Teaming up Lugosi with the "Immortal Clara Bow" is not a plus for Lugosi at all. His personal life did not make him a great actor, although in some ways (drug addiction) it did lead to his downfall.

And Lugosi was not on top in the Fifties. Although a popular figure until his death, Lugosi's box office days were over by the mid-1940's. In fact, Lugosi's agent managed to give the actor some dignity when he garnered the role of Dracula for Bela in *A & C Meet Frankenstein*, a role not at all intended for Lugosi.

While Bela was charming and suave and sexy, he was also arrogant and full of pride, believing himself suited for only Dracula, and not the ignorant monster in *Frankenstein*. Lugosi went to his grave thinking himself Dracula. In every movie, he mimics his Dracula portrayal.

In short, Bela Lugosi was a fine actor, but never as versatile as Karloff, or memorable as Rathbone. The fact is, many of his films were quickies which are now forgettable. If Mr. Rhodes remembers Lugosi as a womanizer who was Oscar material in the Fifties, then let Lugosi be remembered for those things.

Michael G. Cianfarano  
114 West Schuyler St.  
Oswego, N.Y. 13126

Dear Monsterland,

It is with real sadness that I have just learned of the passing of Evelyn Ankers in the pages of *Monsterland*. This came as quite a shock to me, for although I have been, literally, a life-long fan of Miss Ankers, I had lost touch with her whereabouts and her professional standing. Just recently I located an address where she could be reached, but upon realizing that she had retired from films years ago for want of time with her husband and family, I decided not to write, and not to invade her private sanctuary. I almost wish now that I had.

I will never forget her image in the great old Universal classics; always an intelligent and graceful performer, Miss Ankers added an aura of dignity and female strength to her roles, which was an element sorely needed in the scream-fests of horror's Golden Age in film.

Her death brings memories that will never pass away.

Martin Powell  
10907 Torrington Road  
Valley Station, KY 40272

## TIOBITS & TASTY MORSELS

George Maranville of Lexington, Kentucky hopes that



And here's *Monsterland* contributor Ron Borst with *The Golem* at L.A.'s *Weekend Of Horror*. Photo by *FrightFan Dante Renta*.

the film *Cannibal Girls* will be released on home video. An early film directed by Ivan (Shortbaster) Raitman, it also features SCTV veterans Andrea Martin and Eugene Levy. \*\*\* 15 year old Alecia Jones of Newark, NJ says that *The Wolfman* is her number one FaveFilm but that she herself would like to be as vampish as Elvira! (Nor "choke" Elvira!) \*\*\* Richard Reed of Mt. Carmel, Illinois hopes to see more articles on *Nightmare On Elm Street's* Freddy Krueger and his school locker is filled with pictures of Freddy! He also says, "I hope to see more about all that is going on in the world of monsters!"

More scaremail next ish from your hostess with the mostess—that 50 foot babe, after all, is in the 50 foot old folks home, but I'm here to stay—Evila!

Address all letters to:



The LetterHead  
8399 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Suite 210  
Canoga Park, CA 91304

# MOVIES

PREVIEWED



The executive producer, star and director of *Labyrinth*: George Lucas, David Bowie and Jim Henson.



A creation from Jim Henson's Creature Shop.

## LABYRINTH



**LABYRINTH** IS DIRECTED BY Jim Henson and employs many of the same creative people responsible for *The Dark Crystal*, including conceptual designer Brian Froud. George Lucas is executive producer of this fantasy. The film stars David Bowie with Jennifer Connelly and a host of characters created especially for the film.

Henson and associates have created a totally new cast of fantastic creatures.

The story details a young girl's hazardous journey through a labyrinth on a desperate rescue mission in a race against time.

The screenplay is by Monty Python veteran Terry Jones and Laura Phillips based on a story by Jim Henson and Dennis Lee.

David Bowie, one of the only two human performers on screen in the film, also performs songs written specifically for *Labyrinth*. Trevor Jones adds the score.

Director of photography is Alex Thomson whose recent work includes the lush *Excalibur* (1980), for which he received an Oscar nomination, *Exorcist* (1982), *The Keep* (1982), *Electric Dreams* (1983), *Legend* and *The Year of the Dragon*.



Jennifer Connelly confronts the wonders of *Labyrinth*.



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A  
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# FEARBOOK



BY DOUGLAS BORTON

In 1953, special effects ace Ray Harryhausen felt himself growing restless. He had just completed the spectacular stop-motion animation for Werner Brothers' *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, which had opened to huge crowds and become the surprise hit of the year. "I wanted to take a vacation," Harryhausen later recalled, "and Rome seemed like a good place to go." Lacking the money to finance the trip on his own, he wrote up a ten-page proposal for a science-fiction film called "The Giant Ymir," about a Varusian space monster on a rampage in Italy. But Jack Dietz, the producer of *Beast*, wasn't interested. Harryhausen's Roman holiday would have to wait.

The effects man went on to team up with an embellished young producer, Charles H. Schneer. Together they created two superior low-budget science fiction thrillers, *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (1955) and *Earth Vs. The Flying Saucers* (1956). After completing a brief dinosaur sequence for Irwin Allen's documentary *The Animal World* (1956), Harryhausen showed Schneer his "Giant Ymir" story. Schneer liked the idea and sold the film to Columbia Pictures.

Originally the alien monster had been tied into mythology: the name "Ymir" refers to the Norse snow giant. Once this angle on the story was dropped, the title was changed to *20 Million Miles To Earth*, and the name "Ymir" was left out of the movie's dialogue. Also dropped was an opening sequence on the surface of Venus. "We didn't want to do a space adventure, running around another planet," said Harryhausen. "Besides, we didn't have the money for that."

Schneer and Harryhausen did have the money to shoot in color, but Harryhausen demurred. To insert his animated miniature models into live-action surroundings, Harryhausen used a combination of rear-projection and split-screen techniques. He knew that color would greatly complicate the process, yielding grainy, washed-out backgrounds. The new black and white film stocks, on the other hand, allowed almost perfect rear-projection composites. Not until *First Men in The Moon* (1964), which used traveling mattes rather than rear projection, would Harryhausen's animation blend so seamlessly with live action again.

Released in 1957, *20 Million Miles To Earth* was yet another hit for the Schneer-Harryhausen team, paving the way for their ground-breaking *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* one year later.

## The Story Begins—



Our story begins with a spaceship screaming out of the sky. The fishermen of the Sicilian village of Genna look up, startled, as the enormous craft plunges into the sea only a few hundred yards from their boats.

On one boat is a small boy, Pepe, and his father. They row to the spaceship and Pepe's father forces his way inside. He fights through a haze of steam and wrecked machinery to find two astronauts—unconscious but alive. The men are pulled to safety moments before the spaceship sinks.

They are taken to an Italian hospital. The first to awaken is Colonel Calder. He is alert and unharmed, but the woman attending him, the attractive Marisa Leonardo, orders him to rest. "Are you my doctor?" Calder asks. "Well," she replies, "I'm almost a doctor." Calder, unimpressed, explains to "almost-a-doctor" that he was the leader of a secret U.S. mission to Venus. The astronauts explored the planet's surface and brought back an unborn alien life form. On their return to Earth, their ship went off-course and crashed. His companion in the next bed, Dr. Sharmon, is the only other survivor—and he, too, is dying.

Calder shakes Sharmon awake and asks him about the specimen. Where is it? How long can it survive in the metallic cylinder in which it is stored? But Sharmon is unable to reply. He dies in his Colonel's arms. Marisa injects Calder with a sedative and gently puts him back to bed.

## ENTER THE ALIEN



The cylinder, floating free of the spaceship, drifts ashore. Pepe finds it and opens it. A gelatinous mass slides out—the Venusian's egg. The enterprising youngster sells the egg to an elderly zoologist, Dr. Leonardo, who happens to be Marisa's grandfather.

Leonardo is baffled by the object. He leaves it on a table for later study.

Night falls. Moonlight plays on the egg. Inside it, something begins to stir... to twitch... to claw and squirm. A tiny hand bursts out. The foot-tall creature wriggles free and stands up slowly on two scaly, triple-jointed legs. The long tail curls and uncurls. The alien looks around, blinking in confusion.

Marisa enters and switches on the light. She sees the creature and shouts for her grandfather. Leonardo appears and studies the animal as it paces back and forth on the table. "Look at the torso," he breathes, "almost human..." No animal known to science looks like this—a nightmare cross between a Tyrannosaurus Rex and a human being. The professor seizes the alien and places it in a cage at the back of his trailer.

When he lifts the tarp from the cage the next morning, Leonardo is astounded to find that the creature has grown to a height of three feet! The old man tells Marisa that they must take the specimen to the Rome Zoo—immediately.

Searching the beach, Calder finds the empty cylinder. Pepe offers to lead him to the cylinder's contents—for a price. But by the time Calder and the Italian police working with him have arrived at Leonardo's place, the trailer is gone.

## ON THE LOOSE



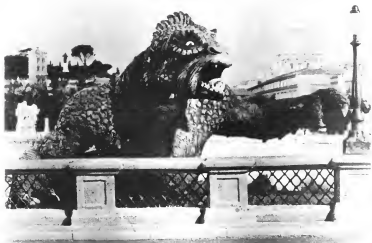
The trailer, towing the cage, speeds through a forest.

The tarp comes loose and Leonardo stops to fix it. Marisa is startled as a clawed hand bursts through the tarp and seizes her by the throat! She pulls free. The creature, grown to a height of five feet, tears open the cage, leaps out and races away.

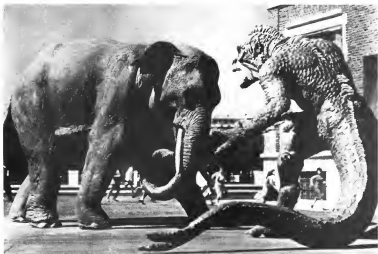
Seconds later Calder and the police appear. They hear Leonardo's story and set out in pursuit of the alien. The alien finds a barn and searches it for food. A watchdog leaps on the alien and the two struggle. The alien kills the dog, then attacks the farmer who has come to investigate. Calder and his men appear and try to capture the beast, but



Confronting the Terror



Their week in Rome.



The Yig confronts an Earth creature his own size.



The Yolk held captive... but not for long.



The Yolk is crowned in the arena.

It fights back savagely and finally crashes through one wall of the barn. The Venusian disappears into the darkness.

The next day, Army helicopters spot the alien and coax it into the open by dropping bags of sulphur, its food. Then a helicopter releases a wire-mesh net on the animal, and troops under Calder's direction quickly hammer down the net. Finally Calder sends thousands of volts of electricity crackling through the net, rendering the creature unconscious.

At the Rome Zoo, the alien is strapped to a giant platform and immobilized with a continuous low-level electric current. It continues its amazing growth, which Calder attributes to the unnatural effect of Earth's atmosphere on its metabolism. Calder also renews his acquaintance with Marisa, and romance blossoms.

### A SAD END



But then a freak accident in the lab cuts off the flow of electricity. The creature, now twenty feet tall, breaks loose. It engages a zoo elephant in battle and the two behemoths lumber through the streets of



The Yem's last stand.

Rome, crushing cars and terrorizing the populace. Finally the alien kills the elephant, then submerges in the Tiber River.

Hand grenades tossed into the water scare the animal back to dry land, where its rampage goes on. The Venusian topples the columns of the Temple of Saturn, then scales the Coliseum.

Calder, left with no alternative, orders the troops to open fire on the beast with bazookas. Blasted from its perch, the creature tumbles to the ground, taking a large part of the ancient monument with it. Its lifeless body lies amid the rubble. The crowd surges forward to surround the fallen monster as Calder and Marisa embrace.



#### CAST

Colonel Calder.....	William Hopper
Marisa Leonardo.....	Joan Taylor
Dr. Leonardo.....	Frank Puglia
Pepe.....	Bart Bratter



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Sissy Spacek has a religious experience in *CARRIE*.



# MONSTERAMA



## DE PALMA SPEAKS

BY ANTHONY TIMPONE

*It is difficult to imagine director Brian DePalma making an uncontroversial film. His movies, including **Carrie**, **Dressed To Kill** and **Scarface** are always the center of controversy when they open. Their frank sexuality and choreographed violence cause strong reactions. **Body Double** appears to have solidified his reputation as one of Hollywood's biggest troublemakers.*

DePalma has been busy writing, producing and directing films for more than half of his 42 years. The New Jersey-born filmmaker first received recognition for a couple of independent comedies in the late Sixties, but quickly moved into the area of screen terror with **Sisters** (1972) which starred Margot (Superman) Kidder as a murderer. **Phantom of the Paradise**, a rock version of **Phantom of the Opera**, followed soon after. Subsequent DePalma thrillers include **Obsession**, the classic **Carrie**, **The Fury**, **Dressed To Kill** and **Blow Out**.

ML: Let's start with the controversy first. Do you deliberately walk the R—X tightrope with your films?

DePalma: Well, we don't sit around board rooms saying, 'Where we gonna' put the sex scene or where we gonna' put the violence.' We don't want to get into fights with the ratings boards because it takes a lot out of you, and no one wants trouble. If you get an X, you can't get the film distributed. They want us to solve these problems. They don't want to see bloodbaths in the New York Times saying 'They're censoring him' and 'They're saying it's excessively violent.' We don't look for these fights, strange as it may seem. We don't think it will help sell a movie.

ML: Did the controversy over the violence in **Scarface** help sell the movie?

DePalma: The controversy over the violence in **Scarface** did not help sell any more tickets. In fact, it turned a lot of people off. They thought it was horrendously violent and they kept out of the theatre. Only when it showed up on cassettes did they say, 'Hey, this picture isn't so violent. What was all the fuss about?' It completely put the attention in the wrong area of what **Scarface** is about.

ML: Some say that the power drill murder in **Body Double** was too much. Did you go too far that time?

DePalma: The movie has a very violent murder scene, no question about it. It's also a murder mystery and murder is a very violent subject. But it is just a part of the movie. It wasn't put in there just to sell tickets, which is essentially what a lot of people think.

ML: Did you go overboard with the sex scenes in **Body Double**?

DePalma: I don't think there's so much sex in the movie. It's only the scene where he (Craig Wasson) watches her do her dance and the porn trailer. That trailer has to reflect that it is a trailer about pornography. I don't think it's excessive. But, that's a very personal judgment of what is too much. That you have to judge yourself. For me, it seems to be the right amount of both in **Body Double**. It's hard to deal with.

ML: How do you feel about groups who are trying to put a stop to movies such as **Body Double** because of their content?

DePalma: I feel that when you are dealing in a fictional form you shouldn't have to deal with political groups and how they want to be represented. We all have free will to decide whether we want to see the movie. We can even pick it, I



The party is a bomb in *CARRIE*.



Kirk Douglas plans to take Amy Irving for a ride in *THE FURY*.

don't think we should give people guidelines on how to make movies or that we should legislate against them being made because we think they're too violent, too sexy or whatever. That's a very repressive society and I don't think it's necessary. I wouldn't want to live in a society like that.

**ML:** Do you have a fascination with the dark side of life?

**DePalma:** Maybe it's the world I live in. It's a very manipulative world. I've always dealt with it. It's just the way I see things.

**ML:** Do you agree with the Hitchcock theory that pictures and emotions should tell a story with sound as a secondary consideration?

**DePalma:** I do agree with that. You can't expound on what the master said.

**ML:** Your films play with reality a lot. Why?

**DePalma:** *Body Double* has a lot to do with acting and what is movie reality, what is porn reality and what is MTV reality. I always try to show that the medium is the message. The way the film is rendered tells you a lot about the people in it. The interesting thing about *Body Double* is that the character Jake moves into different genres and different film forms but still manages to hold his identity. I've made movies where I shift styles dramatically and tell the story in a different type of filmmaking grammar. That style cohered to the plot of *Body Double*.

**ML:** Was *Body Double* just about a claustrophobic nightmare inside of Jake's head?

**DePalma:** I have a tradition in my films where terrible things are happening and people wake up, as in *Dressed to Kill* and

Carrie. I wanted to try and reverse that in *Body Double*. I wanted to use the convention from Forties films where you get somebody in a totally impossible situation, and then he wakes up and realizes that the whole movie has been a dream. There's no way to get out of where he is. What I wanted to do was have Jeff in this impossible situation—he's claustrophobic and being buried alive—and then suddenly he wakes up and he's right back in the first scene. For a second you're supposed to think that the whole movie before is part of that claustrophobic nightmare he had while he was sitting in the grave. Then he realizes that in order to save his job and his life he has to act. And when he acts, suddenly he comes out and he's back in the movie. You realize that the fantasy has been that flashback scene where he's back on the set, and not the whole movie.

ML: Is it difficult to pay homage to Alfred Hitchcock's films without copying the master's works literally?

DePalma: That's the question I've been asked and had to answer for over 12 years now. Hitchcock pioneered all the great suspense stories and the grammar that we use in the genre. If you are going to make movies in this genre, you would be stupid and silly not to use some of the stuff he pioneered. Consequently, you build upon that. It's not unusual to paint in a certain school, or write in a certain style—realistic or fantasy.

*Body Double*, no matter where its roots are, has got to exist on its own level. If it is just a trashy copy of the great master's work, then that's exactly what it is. But I've made enough films to have my own sensibility—my own way of looking at things. I use a lot of Hitchcock's grammar but I've also created a whole bunch of things that I do myself.

I've built upon this. I think it's different than Hitchcock in many ways, and it's similar to Hitchcock in many ways. So, I don't think it's bad to use something that somebody's pioneered before, as long as you do something different with it and infuse it with your own style.

ML: What were your impressions of *Psyche II*?

DePalma: There are plenty of imitations. *Psyche II* is a good example. It was a Xerox of Hitchcock which wasn't very good and isn't worth discussing.

ML: Wasn't *Body Double* supposed to be shot in New York City and not California?

DePalma: I usually shoot in cities that I lived in and know. I walk around and look for locations to get ideas all the time. *Body Double* was originally set in New York with New York actors. But when I got to Hollywood I realized that its locations were more stimulating for the kind of picture that I wanted. New York is an interesting city, but there are a lot of interesting cities.

ML: How should the audience react to *Body Double*? How do you expect them to react when you direct your thrillers?

DePalma: I think you are supposed to be taken in with him. Anyone would look through that telescope to look at that girl. But, if you can't relate to the characters, then you can't be interested in watching the movie. If the fears and desires are too alien to you, it wouldn't work. I think *Body Double* does if you get sucked into the setup.

ML: What's next from Brian DePalma?

DePalma: I was working on a rock and roll movie, but the more I see MTV the more I wonder; it's been done to death. I've also wanted to do a movie about the Yablonski murders, and if a good comedy script comes along I'd do it. I have some suspense ideas floating around my head...



Craig Wasson as the blonde vampire in *BODY DOUBLE*.



FROM  
ENGLAND

# METROPOLIS

TERROR  
WAITS FOR YOU  
IN EVERY ROOM



BY ERIC L. HOFFMAN

## VAMPING THE VAMPIRE IN THE UK



y 1970, Amicus Pictures had established itself as one of the two major producers of films macabre (Hammer Films, of course, being the other). During its formative period, the company had made some attempts at sci fi films (the two *Dexter* films and *They Came from Beyond Space*, for example) and the psychological chiller (Robert Bloch's *The Psychopath*). But it was in the realm of the horror film that Amicus found its niche.

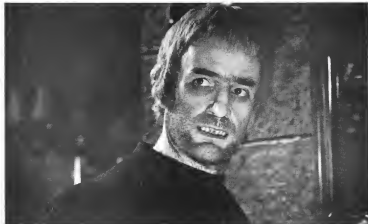
A tentative start had been made with 1959's *City of the Dead* (released in the U.S. as *Horror Hotel*) with Christopher Lee. But it wasn't until 1964 that the company returned to the macabre genre with the classic Dr. Terror's House of Horrors. The film's success set the direction of the majority of the company's productions—multiple-story anthology chillers nearly becoming a trademark.

*The House That Dripped Blood* (1970) was Amicus' third anthology chiller and its fifth collaboration with noted writer Robert Bloch. While an uneven production, the film remains fondly remembered by fans.

Directed by Peter Duffell, *House* was assembled in the usual format: a framework story serving as an introduction for various segments.

For the frame for his screenplay, Bloch introduced the character of Inspector Holloway of Scotland Yard. The inspector investigating the disappearance of one Paul Henderson, a noted horror movie star who has mysteriously disappeared while living in a house he had leased while making a movie. Holloway soon learns, first from a local constable, then from the estate agent for the house, a gentleman named Stoker (!), that the house has had a strange history. All of its tenants have come to unpleasant, macabre ends.





Dominick (Tom Adams) hunts the tenants of *The House That Dripped Blood*.

A hard, down-to-earth realist, Holloway discounts the idea of the house itself being behind what has occurred. He soon finds the missing actor and learns firsthand the truth about the house and its influence.

## TERROR TRIO PLUS ONE

The main contents of the picture were four stories:

1) "Method for Murder": Charles, a writer of horror-mystery stories, moves into the house with his wife in order to work on a new novel featuring the character of Dominick, an insane strangler. The writer soon actually sees Dominick, who dispatches the author's psychiatrist. It's all part of a plot by his wife, Alice, and her lover, an actor, to drive Charles insane. But Alice soon discovers that sometimes an actor can become too involved in a part.

(I wonder which part of Alice he became interested in?—EW/a)

2) "Waxworks": retired stockbroker Philip Grayson, the next tenant in the house, and an old friend, Rogers, were in love for many years with the same woman. So it comes as a shock to Philip to find that the statue of Salome in a wax museum in the nearby town, has a frightening resemblance to their long-lost beloved. The museum's owner says that the statue was modeled from his late wife. Eventually both Philip and Rogers discover the grisly secret of the statue with its strange attraction for them...and the changing heads of John The Baptist!

(That must make for a really docile date, or does it?—EW/a)

3) "Sweets To The Sweet": Tenant 3 is widower John Reid. A seemingly cold, aloof man, Reid hires a young woman, Ann, to serve as governess for his little girl, Jane. The girl is a strange youngster who has been forbidden by her father to play with dolls and is absolutely terrified of

fire for some unknown reason. When Ann, feeling sorry for little Jane, buys her a doll, Reid's reaction of anger and fear results in the doll being tossed into the living room fire. This sets the stage for Ann eventually learning that Reid doesn't hate his little girl. . . he's terrified of her. The reason? It seems that mother was a full-fledged witch and little Jane has inherited her powers! When Reid begins to suffer agonizing attacks of pain, Ann soon discovers that Jane has a wax doll and some pins!

4) "The Cloak": Veteran horror movie star Paul Henderson (remember—he's the object of Inspector Holloway's investigation) rented the house in order to be near the studio where he is filming his latest picture, a low-budgeted epic entitled "The Curse of the Bloodsuckers!" When he is dissatisfied (to put it mildly) with the 'vampire's cloak' he is to wear in the picture ("Take that away! Use it for draperies.") Henderson sets out to find something that looks more authentic. A business card for a costume shop, found in his dressing room, leads Henderson to the very out-of-the-way, bizarre store. The owner, Theo Von Herbon, is a strange old man who sells Paul a cloak that turns out to be a more authentic-looking vampire's cloak than even he bargained for! When he puts it on for a scene, he really tries to fang his co-star, Carla. When he puts it on at home and the cloak chimes midnight, he grows fangs and actually rises into the air! And when he finally attempts to explain about the cloak's powers to Carla, she reveals that she has a rather unpleasant surprise for him! (And together they sing *Fangs For The Memories—Evile*.)

## FANG-IN-CHEEK

The factor that made *The House That Dripped Blood* a favorite among many horror fans is its underlying current, in appropriate places, of Bloch-ian humor. There are little

in-jokes that fans of the macabre genre will pick up; the estate agent's name is Stoker (prompting, I believe, one of the film's characters to ask if the fan's first name is Abraham!); Paul Henderson's character is an expert on the occult, horror films and characters of terror mythology, as well as a gourmet cook (sound a little familiar?).

*House* is a mixed bag in the overall effect of its stories. Since each tale is an individual set-piece all its own, it "... stands or falls on its own merits," to quote Britain's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

*House* features four excellent performers in the main roles in each of the film's stories (in order of their appearance): Denholm Elliott, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee and Jon Pertwee. Elliott, a popular, familiar face to British audiences, and now known over here for his appearances in such pictures as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Trading Places*, is Charles, the haunted writer. Peter Cushing is the haunted 'hero' of the "Waxworks." Christopher Lee winds up on the receiving end of evil in "Sweets To The Sweet" and Jon Pertwee is the flamboyant horror film actor Paul Henderson in "The Cloak."

Unfortunately, while each story was potentially solid chill material, they didn't live up to expectations. The terror tale of the writer and his psychopathic creation, Dominick, didn't really work, despite the efforts of Elliott (who gave a nice scaring performance of desperation mixed with the possible feeling that he is going out of his mind). The ending was a nice twist but somehow everything didn't quite jell.

It is a bit difficult to figure out why Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee were cast in what were, in the end, only appetizers to the film's main course. But both applied their usual terror talents. Lee particularly makes the most of one of his infrequent opportunities to be the victim rather than the victimizer (and little Chloe Franke as his witch-child Jane, was all the more effective with her angelic looks, adding to the impact of the revelation about her and the story's conclusion).

In the end *The House That Dripped Blood* is most remembered for its spoof of horror movies and the low-budget industry that was springing up like crazy, shooting chillers on a virtual shoestring. The framing sequence may be the movie's strongest point.

It would be interesting to speculate as to why producers Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg didn't cast the likes of Cushing, Lee or Vincent Price (whose sense of comedy is excellent). Instead they selected what must have seemed on first reaction, to be a very odd and unlikely choice for the role of Paul Henderson. The missing horror film star is played by actor and comedian Jon Pertwee, virtually unknown to U.S. movie audiences, but very recognizable to the British for his radio voices (as well as his starring role in what is considered to be the longest running radio comedy series ever to air on British radio, *The Navy Lark*) as well as television and some film work.

Playing the part of Henderson with a flamboyant air, a nostalgia for the "classic" horror films ("... Frankenstein, Phantom of the Opera, Dracula! The one with Bela Lugosi, not the other fellow.") and a larger than life persona, Jon Pertwee can be said to have walked off with the film from its veteran terror stars. He was aided and abetted in his "crime" by gorgeous Ingrid Pitt (whose vampire in *The Vampire Lovers* still had male audiences drooling at the memory) and Geoffrey Baylton as the bizarre, mysterious costume shop owner.

"The Cloak" is a delight as it pokes fun at horror films with an affectionate eye. There are many delicious bits of fun (Henderson's annoyance at the film's freshly painted set... as he pokes holes into it with his cane; his rejection of the vampire's cloak handed to him by the wardrobe women—"... who does this belong to, the Flying Nun?"; the name of the strange costume shop owner, Theo von Harbin, a play on the name of Thea Von Harbou, who wrote many of Fritz Lang's films during his filmmaking days in Germany; Henderson's expertise in matters of the occult; monsters and even gourmet cooking; the name of the almost mass-produced film Henderson is making... and his remarks about the company making it).



Inspector Holloway (John Bennett) leads the real horror behind *The House*.

While not an overall success, *The House That Dripped Blood* remains excellent entertainment. Its three opening stories serve as pleasant, sometimes effective, appetizers to the main course, the spoof/chiller that so well deserves the recognition and affection that it receives from Monsterland fans!

*Next issue:* Our capture of Jon Pertwee was cloaked in secrecy—he was flying over Monsterland when... but you'll learn all when we interrogate him—Evie



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# POLTERGEIST II

## "The other side"

BY JAMES VAN HISE

In 1982 the Freeling family experienced the horror of confronting what lurks beyond the threshold of the living. This summer, we will learn the secrets behind that first confrontation. The Freeling's will once again duel the undead and literally go through Hell to uncover the answers.

Only a blasted plot of land marks the spot where their home once stood in now-deserted Cuesta Verde. Abandoned and overgrown, the dead remains of the community reflect the terror which once lay hidden beneath its thriving exterior. The coffins from the desecrated cemetery have been retrieved, but the peace and security can never be restored. Memories of the horror that once picturesque bedroom community suffered through linger.

Since 1982, Steve and Diane Freeling have lived with their children in Phoenix, Arizona, secure in the belief that the nightmare is over. They're about to learn that safety is elusive. The thing they fled has tracked them down. It's ready to begin its new plot to secure little Carol Anne for its barely fathomable purposes.

Instead of re-exploring old ground, *Poltergeist II* expands on the first film and penetrates into the world where Carol Anne was held prisoner. This time the audience forcibly confronts the true nature of the Beast. Neither truly man nor devil, his origins date back to the 1800s when a man penetrated the blackest mysteries of life and death to become both prisoner and monarch of a realm beyond the grave. A realm far closer to our reality than humanity might guess!

### OLD FACES & NEW

Returning in the role of the father, Steve Freeling, is Craig T. Nelson. His gripping performance in the first *Poltergeist* caught the critic's eye. Since then he has been very active in a variety of roles in such films as *Silkworm*, *All the Right Moves* and *The Killing Fields* as well as in the much acclaimed tv series *Call to Glory*.

Describing the Freelings, Nelson

observes that, "The common bond between these people is love—unconditional love and understanding. Their experiences drive them together, rather than apart, and help them to learn more about what they feel for one another."

Returning to the role that marked a turning point in his acting career, Nelson says that it "has been a fortunate experience—a chance to continue something wonderful that began three years ago."

"What made *Poltergeist* more than just a horror film was that there was something very special about the family," adds Jobeth Williams, returning in the part of Diane Freeling, the valiant housewife and mother. "For me, the attraction was a mother's love for her child—a love so strong that she would go to Hell and back to save her."

Since 1982, Williams has appeared in films including *The Big Chill*, *Teachers*, *American Greaser*, *Endangered Species* and the chilling tv movie *The Day After*.

Heather O'Rourke, now nine years old, returns as Carol Anne, the little girl who was abducted into the world beyond. In *Poltergeist II* we learn that it was not just a chance encounter. The reason she was abducted is still luring The Beast to reclaim her.

O'Rourke was originally cast by Steven Spielberg when he saw her in a studio Commissary having lunch.

Returning as Robbie Freeling, is thirteen year old Oliver Robins, who also appeared in *Alphie II* and on a recent episode of the new *Twilight Zone*. In the first *Poltergeist* he was menaced by a living tree. In *Poltergeist II* he'll wish that was all he had to contend with.

Death and *Poltergeist* seem oddly linked. Dominique Dunne, the actress who played the older sister in the original film, was murdered by an ex-boyfriend in October 1982. Strangely, spectre is already haunting the production of *Poltergeist II*. Actor Julian Beck, who plays the pivotal figure of the malevolent Reverend Henry Kane, died after completing his work on the film in 1985.

Through command of the supernatural, Kane, in his human form, seeks once more to kidnap Carol Anne. She

unknowingly possesses something that he can use in his domination of the other world. That world—only talked about in the original *Poltergeist*—will be seen in all its horror in *Poltergeist II*.

Zelda Rubinstein, who made such a big impression in the first film, returns as the psychic Tangine Barrons. Rubinstein has also appeared in such motion pictures as *Sixteen Candles*, *Under the Rainbow*, *Die Laughing* and *American*.

Joining her as a companion well versed in the ways of psychic attack is the Indian, Taylor, played by Will Sampson.

Sampson made his screen debut opposite Jack Nicholson in 1975's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He's also had featured roles in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*, *The White Buffalo*, *Once and a Time* and *Old Man Hawk*. Founder of the American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts, he serves as director on the board of the American Indian Film Institute.

Geraldine Fitzgerald, seen recently in *A Trip to Bountiful*, plays Jess, Diane Freeling's mother. The family has been living with her in Phoenix ever since the terrifying incident in Cuesta Verde. She plays a gifted character who understands what is special about Carol Anne. Sadly this falls to protect the woman from tragedy.

### BEHIND THE SCENES TALENT

The first question people ask when they hear about this film is the inevitable, "Is Steven Spielberg making it?" The answer is no. But the original screenwriters, Mark Victor and Michael Grais (who co-wrote the first film with Spielberg), are returning for the sequel. This time, they'll be producing. Avoiding the traps that other sequels fall into, Victor and Grais create a story which uses the first film only as a touchstone. They explore the ideas which were only raised and discarded in *Poltergeist* in great depth. The sequel looks behind the attacks into the very nature of the "other side" and what lurks there.

How can the dead cross over into the realm of the living? What lies beyond our reality? These are some of the



A pre-production painting for *Pottermore II*.

questions answered in *Pottermore II*.

Britisher Brian Gibson directs the sequel. In this country Gibson is known for his 1983 New Wave musical cult hit *Breaking Glass*. In 1976 he was awarded his first British Academy Award for *Jeep*, a documentary filmed for the British series *Horizon*. It later aired in the US as part of PBS's *Nova*. In 1980, his acclaimed "Blue Remembered Hills" was named Best Television Play of the year by the British Academy.

Director of photography in *Pottermore II* is Andrew Leszlo, whose recent credits include *Streets of Fire*, *First Blood*, *The Warriors* and the tv mini-series *Shogun*.

The special effects team is made up of the same talented experts that made the first film so spectacular. Although no longer connected to Lucasfilm's Industrial Lights and Magic, Richard Edlund and his group of special effects masters are now on their own under the auspices of the Boss Film Company. Their first jobs, in 1984, included *Ghostbusters* and *2010*. Edlund says that the effects for *Pottermore II* are some of the

most challenging he has ever done.

That challenge comes from the man who designed some of the creatures. H.R. Giger (Oscar winner for his nightmarish work on *Alien*) has designed some truly bizarre and horrifying images. They put the talents of Boss

Film to the test—but Giger seems pleased with how his artwork was brought to special effects life. Even he wasn't sure whether his ideas could be duplicated that faithfully. Lurking Things never seen before by man will be captured on screen in *Pottermore III*. ●



The Freezing Family goes to Hell?

**MONSTER**  
LAND

**POLTERGEIST**

*"The other side"*





**MONSTER**

**POLTERGEIST**

"The other side"







Tobe Hooper at work in the remake of *INVADERS FROM MARS*.

# TOBE HOOPER: DIRECTOR FROM MARS

BY RON MAGID



**RELEASING THE MANIACS OF** *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the vampires of Salem's Lot and the ghostly demons of *Pet Sematary* wasn't enough for him. He's back for more horrors! And what ghastly menaces will be at the forefront of his new wave of terror? Why, Tobe Hooper is releasing *Invaders from Mars*, of course. Hooper's long-awaited remake of the William Cameron Menzies classic may be his most ambitious project ever, and the most demanding. It's no easy task bringing state-of-the-art sci fi to the giant screen. Even from the very beginning, the new *Invaders* had a rather quirky history.

Interest in remaking the film

began when Scot Holton, the current incarnation's unit publicist, devoted an issue of the remarkable fanzine, *Fantascene*, to Menzies and the original *Invaders from Mars*.

Edward Alperson, Jr.—whose father had produced the original film—located all of the legal documents pertaining to remake rights and proceeded to shop the project to the studios. At that point, Tobe Hooper became involved.

"It was brought to me more than once," Hooper recalls. "Right after *Pet Sematary*, a producer came to me with the project. It really interested me, but it didn't get off the ground. Afterwards, the project wound up at ICM [a talent agency]. When I changed agencies, and made a multiple picture deal with Cen-

non Films, *Invaders from Mars* was one of the properties available to put in my package. So, I thought, 'It's time to do it!' It seems it was fated for me to do. It takes so long to finally get on film. In this case, four or five years isn't that long. *Salem's Lot* had the same kind of evolution. It followed me around for four years."

## MASSACRE & MARTIANS

Because of the numerous technical challenges posed by *Invaders from Mars*, Hooper assembled a crew of top notch professionals in every department. He had worked with many of them before. Foremost among these were cinematographer Daniel Pearl and special effects supervisor-second unit





Tobe Hooper lays down the rules to an alien watchdog in *INVADERS FROM MARS*

director John Dykstra. Pearl was Hooper's cameraman on both *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and the Billy Idol video, *Dancing with Myself*, while Dykstra created the excellent effects for *Lifeorce*. Dykstra was hired at Hooper's insistence. The two men enjoy a very good working relationship, as Hooper explains: "I can trust John. John and I have a kind of telepathy that really makes things go faster, better, smoother, with very little talk about how to do it. I love working with him."

Hooper is excited about Dykstra's effects for *Invaders from Mars*, which promise to be unlike anything ever seen on film before. He is unconcerned about any stigma against his current project stemming from *Lifeorce*. *Invaders from Mars* is so different from *Lifeorce*, Hooper insists. "*Lifeorce* had a great look but lacked a screenplay. There wasn't a hell of a lot that could be done about that except to change it completely. The film started off as *Space*

*Vampires*, and that's actually what it should've been called. With that title you'd look at that picture with a completely different set of sunglasses! *Invaders* is so unlike that film, it has such a good story. It's a tight, moving, relatable story. I'm not worried about any prejudice towards it. I don't expect that there would be a lot of identification of one of my films with another, because they're all different."

No director could have two more dissimilar works than Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Invaders from Mars*. Though *Chainsaw* has that rough-and-tumble documentary look, while *Invaders* has a fluid, dreamy—though terrifying—quality, both films were photographed by the same man, Daniel Pearl. Working with Pearl again, Hooper says, "was one of the most fun things that's happened to me in ten years, since *Chainsaw*."

Pearl was also thrilled by the reunion. "A big part of it was that Tobe

wanted to assemble the old team for luck or what have you," says Pearl. "We had rehearsed for *Dancing with Myself* and that had worked out fine. Tobe was really anxious to get back together and so was I, because every time we got together we'd made great films. The greatest thing about this business is contributing toward making a piece that everybody loves. Getting all the positive feedback from it is the best reward you can possibly get! I like to work with directors who make those kind of films. Certain collaborations result in something special every time you get together with that person."

## MARTIAN MTV

The current collaboration between Hooper and Pearl may be one of the most fortuitous in screen history. Pearl, who has photographed nearly two hundred rock videos, was fascinated by the possibilities inherent

in Vari-Lites, the robotic, colorful lights used primarily at live rock concerts and in performance videos: Pearl had tried for years to interest video directors in utilizing the Vari-Lites to create otherworldly lighting effects. It took Tobe Hooper's daring and foresight to finally implement them in a feature film. The Vari-Lites were used only for scenes involving the interior and exterior of the Martian spaceship. They appeared primarily in the throneroom of the Supreme Intelligence, the serpentine leader of the Martian Invaders. Hooper and Pearl actually had the lights built right into the spacecraft sets, where it appears that the Supreme Intelligence has the power to control the intensity, color and direction of the various light beams at will. The result is the most awesome display of kinetic light ever captured on film—the Vari-Lites flicker and change color at the rate of once every 12-18 frames!

Coordinating the mechanical effects, smoke and steam with the main action was Hooper's great logistical problem. The noise level inside the five-story Martian spaceship set was deafening. Hooper found himself screaming at the top of his lungs in order to communicate with his crew and actors. "I was shouting throughout the entire making of the film," Hooper recalls, "but then the soundtrack is always looped on a special effects picture. You shoot with Vistavision cameras which are about the size of a Volkswagen and sound just like a Volkswagen. Sometimes all of the equipment was so loud that I had to use a special p.a. system that I had built inside the spaceship. Many times when I would coordinate action inside the set, some things would be happening a hundred yards away while others were taking place three feet from the lens. Then the set was rigged with various types of steam and smoke, which made it extremely hot, like a giant five-story sauna. It was difficult to coordinate all of that over the din of the cameras, the Vari-Lites and the lightning machines, which sound like an electric chair going off!"

## ACTING AUTOMATONS

As if this wasn't bad enough, Hooper also had to contend with the people inside the mechanical Martian drone suits, as well as deal with the articulated Supreme Intelligence puppet. "Things were always ready on the set before the creatures were. The Martian

drones were so heavy that they had to be lifted with a forklift," Hooper says. "We had to suit the actors up, and then the forklift would take them up to the various levels of the set. The suits were like big machines those guys were in, and so it was a bit limiting. I think they look great moving! They were cumbersome and hard to direct, but I had a really good lot. Stan Winston's team was on top of it."

The Martian drones and Supreme Intelligence, built by Stan Winston from Bill Stout's exceptional designs (see last issue for Stout's fantastic story), are said to be the best articulated creatures ever put on film, and promise to set a standard of excellence for years to come. The Supreme Intelligence is able to puff out its cheeks, roll its eyes and articulate words. Hooper was so entranced by its abilities that he began to treat it as another actor! "In some cases, I would be screaming at him like an actor, and he'd respond just like an actor. There were five guys coordinating the eye movement and facial expressions by radio control, and it was really easy to communicate with them. I would scream at the Supreme Intelligence to shout or make a sound, then I'd tell him which way to move his eyes and then I'd say, 'More bladder movement!' which would make these lunglike things begin to breathe. They'd undulate while all the little veins would start popping."

Invaders from Mars may be the first film in history to have its entire look determined by the availability of its star, nine-year-old Hunter Carson. Because a child actor is only allowed to work four hours a day, Hooper and Pearl designed very long, intricate camera moves that would cover an entire scene in one shot. At first Hooper worried about the effect of these long takes on the pacing of his film, until he and Pearl came to the simultaneous realization that people dream in long, subjective shots, not in cuts. "That was one of the nice things about the original," Hooper comments. "I think I even underlined and strengthened that in the remake."

## FUTURE FRIGHT

Underlining and strengthening is what Hooper's remake of *Invaders from Mars* is all about. Under Hooper's elegant direction, with superb camera work by Daniel Pearl, inspired visuals from John Dykstra and imaginative

designs by Bill Stout, the film promises to be every bit the equal of the original. And that is no small feat!

While Hooper is continuing to edit *Invaders*, he is already preparing for his next project: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*. Unbelievably, Cannon Films wants Hooper's sequel—to be scripted by Hunter Carson's father, L.M. "Kilt" Carson—in the theatres by late August of 1988! "I'm definitely producing it, and if I have time to direct it, I will," promises Hooper. "I'm still in post-production on *Invaders*, but if there's a way..." And the man who was brought to fame and fortune by chainsaws will try to be there when the blades begin to whirr!

"Both films come out this summer, in a couple of weeks I'll know if I can direct *Chainsaw II*. I'm supposed to, and I want to, but whether or not it's really possible depends on the post-production schedule of *Invaders from Mars*. I would love to work with Daniel Pearl again on it, if our schedules will permit!"

As for Hooper's long-term plans? "There's always things," Hooper laughs. "I've found some exciting projects. They're what I call fun, and they're in the fantastic genre. There's quite a few projects to move right onto, and a vacation in there somewhere!"

*Their conquest has already begun...*

# Invaders From Mars

TUBE HOOPER PRESENTS

*He knows they're here...  
But nobody believes him*

BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY BY DAN O'BANION  
STORY BY DAN O'BANION  
DIRECTED BY TUBE HOOPER  
CASTING BY DAN O'BANION  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: RICHARD BLAKE  
PRODUCED BY DAN O'BANION  
SCREENPLAY BY DAN O'BANION  
CASTING BY DAN O'BANION  
DIRECTED BY TUBE HOOPER

# VIDEO CREATURES

BY RANDY PALMER



An acquaintance who is an avid fan of **MONSTERLAND** told me she was sick and tired of reading my drivel about shadows and subtlety and Lewonesque producers and directors who are just too wimpy to show their audiences a smidgen of hemoglobin. "Can't you find something good to say about stink n-slash pictures?" she asked.

Well, no, I admitted. I can't find much good to say about those movies because they're really not very good.

"Gorror" movies are the easiest horror films to make, because there is no need to evoke terror and suspense. All that counts is the gross-out factor, which can be induced with stage blood and stringy animal entrails. Simple.

That bottom line, of course, is that **there's gold in that stink gore!** Check out the horror section in any video store, and you'll see that gorror films predominate. Not only are all 5 **Friday the 13th** movies available for rent or purchase...but so is the entire Herschell Gore-don Lewis catalog! Further, nearly every B-picture that even **hints** at gore is finding a home at video retailers. How is today's Gorehound (a term coined by the Godfather of Gore, H.G. Lewis) to know which titles will satiate his or her bloodthirst?

## MONSTERLAND TO THE RESCUE!

Those who enjoy gory murders committed in the spirit of good, clean fun will most likely prefer the **Friday the 13th** series of movies. Of the 5, I prefer the so-called **Final Chapter** (Part IV). Not only are the effects perpetrated by Terrific Tom Savini, but this film features the best damselfin-distress. It's the best photographed, and it doesn't sabotage its own reason for existence by minimizing the gore.

The **Burning** features Tom Savini (again!)—Evila gore effects amid another **Friday the 13th** storyline, but the effects are trimmed down considerably. At the other extreme, **Marble** (1980) features some of Savini's (Cut it out!—Evila) most gruesome work. It's definitely one of the goriest films ever made, guaranteed to disgust even the hardest Gorehound. Not quite as repulsive, and seasoned with doses of black humor, is **Andy Warhol's Frankenstein**. This one is recommended not only for its ultra-realistic and highly original gore effects, but also for its clever retelling of the Frankenstein legend. (Warhol's *Dracula*, incidentally, is neither as clever nor as gory.)

Even after all these years, Herschell Lewis is still hard to beat for sheer disgust when it comes to gorror movies. His **Blood Feast** (1963) was the first picture to break the cinematic taboo of gross-out gore. Its gore sequences—a tongue ripped out of a girl's mouth, a caved-in head spilling brains on a beach, an amputated leg (in the first 2 minutes of the film!)—still repulse. Lewis's other schlock-shockers

include **Two Thousand Maniacs**, **Color Me Bled Red**, **The Gruesome Twosome** and **The Wizard of Gore**, and all are available on videotape. His last gorror exercise, **The Gore-Gore Girl** (1972), was released by Midnight Video in January, and features Lewis at his grossest: mangling a face, exploding eyeballs, ironing flesh, boiling a head and more. The **Gore-Gore Girl** is probably the grossest thing on the market right now.

One of the most perverse gorror movies we know of is **Nightmare** (1981)—don't confuse this with earlier films using the same title), which follows the awesome antics of a mental patient as he seeks out his former wife. A sleazy sick film. Gorehounds will love the finale.

If you can locate a copy of **Say of Blood**, do so. You'll be watching one of Mario Bava's later shockers, first released in 1972 as **Twist of the Death Nerve**, and re-released in 1974 as **Last House Part II**. Bava's craftsmanship combines terror and gory murders eloquently.

Unfortunately, that's exactly what happened to **Friday Part II** and **Part V** (A **New Beginning**)—the deaths are edited and cropped into obscurity (e.g., you have to look very close to see that the first boy has been dismembered in **Part V**). **Friday Part III** is laughably enjoyable, but the "flat" video version (**Part III** was filmed in 3-d) is bothersome to watch. The first in the series is our 2nd favorite for 2 reasons: Tom Savini's effects again and Betsy Palmer's portrayal of a looney-tune.

*Evila here—what's all this praise for Tom Savini and his so-called "special effects"? The guy's just a good photographer! You should see the things in our neighborhood he doesn't film!*

There are other gruesome goodies available as well, with such titles as **Sleepaway Camp** and **Sleazy Party Massacre**. But those gorror films mentioned herein are the "scream of the crop" when it comes to ultra-gore.

When you rent these titles...don't forget your barf bag! (Urkl!)



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# EMPIRE O



Terrorvision where the TV watches you.

Empire Pictures may be the American International Pictures of the '80s. With 10 films completed in '85, 20 planned for '86 and an eventual schedule of up to 40 films a year, Charles Band's movie mill is churning them out! The company has recently announced a budget of \$140 million for making 40 new motion pictures. Their recent releases include *Troll*, *Elizabethtown*, *Terrorvision* and *Zene Trappers*.

Two people who worked on *Troll* are former Roger Corman employees who have gone on to Empire—director John Buechler (who supplies most of the makeup effects on Empire's films) and writer Ed Naha. Naha is a fantasy fan from way back and the author of such books as *Horrors From Screen to Screen*, *The Science Fictionary*, *The*

*Making of Dune* and *Brilliance on a Budget—The Cinema of Roger Corman*. He also, under a pseudonym, edited the first issues of *Fangoria*.

"I came from New York three years ago," says Naha, "and did two movies for Corman." One was called *Odoballs*. The other? Well—even threats of bamboo shoots under the fingers could not get Naha to reveal that. After Empire head Charles Band's father read one of Naha's scripts, he went to work for them.

"Originally *Troll* was going to be a gory movie, but the more we talked, the less excited we got about the gore. We decided to come up with a plotline that was more magical and scary than splatter, more the way Val Lewton worked."

Not that Naha is adverse to making a scary shocker. His next screamplay is *The Doll* which is being directed by Stuart Gordon, who did the goofily gory H.P. Lovecraft's *Re-Animator*. "I came up with the idea of a killer doll," Naha reveals. "There's this dollmaker and his wife who are in a house suspended in time with 500 dolls. A group becomes stranded in the house, and are wined and dined and 'introduced' to the 'family' of dolls."

Naha credits director Gordon with "a bizarre sense of humor. It's really a twisted movie, but sweet at the same time. On that film, we had people come in and audition to make dolls. The dolls do terrible things. There is a purpose to what they do."

When asked how he feels *Troll* turned

# F FILMS

BY DENNIS FISCHER

out, Naha replies "Well looks like a hoot, I love stop motion, I go ape for it, and those scenes with the vines remind me of *It Came From Beneath The Sea*. John's (Buechler) makeups are really fun. It's a scary, rollercoaster movie which has gonzo things in it."

Naha has two more Empire films coming up. One of the next will be *Mirror-World*, a children's film, which Naha compares to *Alice's Adventures Through the Looking Glass*. In this one, a boy is invited to go into an alternate universe, and a boy from the alternate universe comes into our world. Naha calls it an adventure-comedy with a dragon and other magical creatures.

Naha's also doing *Spellcaster*, which he calls "an '80s equivalent of *The Old Dark House* and *Night Monster*." It will be filmed in a castle that Charles Band

bought in Italy. Band came up with a title and an idea for an ad then within a couple of weeks, Naha was working on a script.

"In this one, all hell is breaking loose-literally. It's a beyond nuts. Everything happens. I hope it turns out to be a twisted little movie. People come to this castle for a contest, but they end up with more than they bargained for!"

## MANDROIDIS

Both Danny Bilson and Paul De Meo also marvel at the rapidity with which projects come together at Empire. As screenwriters, they had been working for almost a decade without much success. Then, suddenly, Empire

was making several scripts of theirs one after the other. As writers, they've written *Treasures*, *Eliminators* and *Zee Treepers*. Bilson reveals that he became involved with Empire as a camera assistant on *The Gungnester*, *Swordkill* and *The Ghoulies*. He first began work on *Eliminators* two years ago with his writing partner Paul De Meo. It is based on four characters that Charles Band supplied - a mercenary, a ninja, a lady scientist and a mandroid. "We wanted a *Fantastic Four* feel," says Bilson. "It was Charles' idea two years ago (with his writing partner for the film) to be a revenge picture. It went through more and more stages. Originally, they wanted the mandroid to turn into an airplane, a boat, whatever. Something like a Go-Bot, but that was deferred due to budgetary considerations. Still, we had fun dealing



The mandroid from *The Eliminators*.

with a character that had interchangeable arms."

Interchangeable technology is a popular theme at Empire. One of the more ambitious forthcoming films is *Decapitron*, currently subtitled "The Devastation Creation" and also written by De Meo and Bilson. The *Decapitron* is a robot with five different heads: a surveillance head, which is an extremely sophisticated information gathering and observation device, an omnitest head, which is an all-purpose utility-super analyzer unit useful for biochemical breakdowns, medical diagnosis and crime detection; a humanoid head, which can simulate the appearance of any human male in his mid-thirties; a war head with advanced firepower, and finally, a doomday head, the ultimate weapon of last resort.

Paul De Meo acknowledges that "*Decapitron* is an outgrowth of *Eliminators*, which was an intriguing idea. Charles Band wanted to go further with it. While the Mandroid is half man, half machine, the decapitron is all robot. Unlike the Terminator, he's the good guy. He has a kid sidekick, and they go into a city which has its own rules — there's been a plague in the city and it is under quarantine. The inhabitants are survivors of a biological disaster."

## HILARIOUS HORRORS?

Bilson and De Meo believe that a good sense of humor delicately applied can compensate for a less than generous budget. *Treasures* derives humor from its bizarre situation and future slang. In *Eliminators*, the Mandroid keeps commenting on how unbelievable and comic-book-like the whole thing is, putting the audience on his side. De Meo is aware that the proper tone for a picture is important. He and Bilson like to add humor — but they are making action pictures, not comedies.

*Treasures* combines sci fi with film noir elements fairly successfully. Bilson reveals that it was their intention with *Zee Treasures* to combine sci fi with an homage to old war movies. "These four G.I.s, who are all stereotyped war movie characters, are lost behind the lines and find a spaceship. The SS has also heard about the spaceship and is looking for it. Inside the spaceship is a bug man, who is an alien reconnaissance pilot and helps the GIs get away from the S.S. At the end, one of the four is a writer, but the only publication he can sell his story to is

## Fantastic Stories."

*Treasures* was also directed by Bilson, who had an interesting time of it. "We had a German army of Italian-speaking extras," Bilson recalls. "We had to have these Nazi SS troops come across a meadow, and they looked like Girl Scouts. Trying to be Mr. Director, I want to show them how to do it. We're all played army when we were little kids, and you know how to do it, but when I was right in the middle of showing them, I slipped into this big pile of cow slop. Paul (De Meo) cried out helpfully, 'But do you want them to fall in the cowshit?'"

"We had a lot of fun with the Italian prop man," De Meo chimes in. "One of them came up to us and asked where



Jennifer Richards as Medusa in *Terrorvision*.

he should put these two bottles of gin. We wondered what the bottles of gin were for and started looking through the script, thinking that maybe we forgot something. It turned out that somewhere in the script was a description that said two GIs are playing gin. Another time, a prop man bought a pineapple because he didn't know that was a 40's term for a grenade."

The pair have also written another film that will begin production soon, *Journeys Through The Qerk Zone*. Bilson will direct. "It's about these guys who work on a dumping fishing station where people get their anxieties out through recreation," Bilson reveals. Then people start disappearing from this colony on this water planet. It's a little

like *Outland*. An investigation leads to this attraction, which is an alien machine which can project you into an alternate reality to satisfy your fantasies. But it has hidden dangers."

The pair are currently scripting *Aree*, which they describe as *Body and Soul* in space. *Aree* is based around a fantasy sport and involves a bid for a new champion, racketeering and space gangsters.

Bilson is very happy working for Empire. He calls it a secure environment that constantly provides an opportunity to work. He feels that the experience he and others are gaining will build confidence and lead to better-made films. Paul De Meo compares the working atmosphere with "almost being like working at Warners in the '30s. There are lots of people making lots of movies in all kinds of genres." Bilson is particularly proud of the fact that he's been able to work in low-budget, exploitation films without "ever having to do a women-in-prison film or a slasher movie—nothing I would find morally objectionable. That's just not our meat-and-potatoes."

## NIGHTMARE SCHEDULES

Of course, shooting with small budgets keeps a filmmaker on his toes, as Peter Manogian well knows. Manogian has been line producer on most of the early Empire films. He also directed a sequence for *The Dungeonmaster* and is getting his feature-length directorial debut with *Eliminators*. "We had all kinds of problems," Manogian said. "For example, we had this boat exploding stunt which was not that spectacular, so we decided to redo it. The Spanish producer was always concerned about the budget. I told him we needed another boat, and he said 'No problem.' Upon hearing that you just knew there was going to be a problem! He decided to reuse the old boat that had had its back end blown off. I said 'well, OK, if you think it can work.' They rebuilt the stern and added two 240 horsepower motors. I told them, 'I don't believe this is going to work.' The producer said, 'It doesn't run well, but I think it's going to be OK.'"

"Well, we had a lot of shooting and pickups to do, so we left for the location and started work. I decided to ask for the boat an hour ahead of time, so that it would be there when we needed it. After a while, I looked around and wondered where the boat was. I asked why the boat wasn't here. They tell me it's on its way. Still doesn't

show, so I send some guys back to the dock to find out what happened. Next thing we hear is: send your underwater guy (a man in a scuba outfit)! What's wrong, I ask. The engines had fallen off the end of the boat and were submerged. They sent the underwater guy to take a look, thinking he might be able to bring those heavy suckers back up again. He came up and said, 'Yep, they're down there all right.' And they stayed down there and we had to do without the shot."

While Manogian was originally heavily involved in the production end of things at Empire, others are now taking over from him. He's moving more into directing. Manogian will be doing an action film called *Show No Mercy* and producing a jungle adventure called *Tana*, which will be directed by Betsy MacGruder, a former first A.D. "To be fair," Manogian says, "Charlie is very loyal to his people. Empire has become the greatest opportunity for young filmmakers to direct. Ted Nicolaou (*Terraviva*) was an editor; John Buechler (*Troll*, *Ghoulies II*) is a makeup man who has been given a chance."

"Another great thing about Empire is the speed with which their projects get put through. One week there is an idea, in two weeks we get a 'go' (ahead), in four weeks the script is finished - and we're shooting six weeks later. That's often the amount of time it takes to make a decision on a project at a major studio."

Because Empire is a small but very active company that only has a few key people in charge, decisions are made rapidly. Everyone is dedicated to making movies not taking meetings. Additionally, Blison claims that once Band has given a writer a concept, there is a tremendous amount of creative freedom. Whatever is attempted must be (capable of) completion in the time and budget allotted. Band has experience as both a producer and a director. He understands the problems facing young filmmakers.

Manogian is tight-lipped about his future projects, saying simply that "*Mercy* is an action/adventure film, and *Tana* is a thriller/mystery, not a horror film. We want to make entertaining adventure movies with a good command of filmmaking. To do that, you don't need \$10 million; we can make them for \$2-3 million and they are still pictures that are good movies."

## MONSTERS ON THE MARCH

Other pictures on the Empire



Sveny Borg is terrorized by The Troll.

production slate include: *H.P. Lovecraft's From Beyond*, another Stuart Gordon griefest based on an obscure Lovecraft story having to do with stimulating the pineal gland; *Crawlpace*, starring Klaus Kinski as a neo-Nazi who terrorizes an innocent young girl; *Ghoulies II*, which John Buechler, creator of the *Ghoulies*, will be directing (John promises that the sequel will be much better than the first film, with more of the ghoules and more humor, plus some surprises); *Breeder*, about a nasty critter which tears people up, reproducing and getting under one's skin; *Laserblast II*, the return of the Space Gun which was featured in one of Band's early financial successes (the original *Laserblast* was the first sci fi to play after *Star Wars*); *Arise!*, about a monumental war machine; *Mutant Hunt*, written and directed by Tim Kincaid about out-of-control, intelligent mutants on the rampage; *Sattle Bikes* in which the world's most destructive motorcycle is unleashed; *Ghost Town*, a mystery-thriller set in a modern-day ghost town. Finally, there is the long-hoped-for David Allen special effects extravaganza, *The Primevals*.



Aase Lockhart and Band from The Troll.

move (Just recently announced are *Pleasure Planet*, written and directed by Albert F. (Sword and the Sorcerer) Pyun; *Neopolis*; *Kingdom of the Damned*; *I Eat Cannibals*, a training comedy set at a Mercenary Uni.; *Test Tube Teens From the Year 2900*; *Huntress*, a werewolf film; *Bloodless*, about a nightmare called Monster Park; *Vulcan*, an Amazonian picture; *Cellar Dweller* (What foul creature is lurking there?) as well as a few exploitation comedies. Sounds like my kind of fun! - (Evia)



# CREATURE FEATURE

## CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN

IT'S THE MAN, NOT THE MONSTER. . .  
HAMMER'S FRANKENSTEIN SERIES, PART ONE

BY ERIC HOFFMAN

### IN THE BEGINNING

When Hammer Films made *The Curse of Frankenstein* it marked the company's departure from its usual output of black-and-white features. It also began a new chapter in the history of the classic horror film.

The movie was a first in one other way: for the first time, a motion picture based on Mary Shelley's novel was made in color, as well as against the traditional concepts for a Frankenstein film.

Until then, before it became the horror production company that most fans are familiar with, Hammer was known as a reliable producer of moderate-low-budget films that more often than not featured an American actor whose face was familiar to U.S. audiences (usually for the obvious purpose of selling the film to an American distributor). In some cases, one could suspect that the film's plot might have been built around them.

The usual distributor for the bulk of Hammer's B-picture product was the now defunct Lippert Pictures (founded by Robert L. Lippert). Once in awhile, another company, such as Astor Pictures, picked up a Hammer film or two.

During the early Fifties, the company had made a stab at the genre of the fantastic, but the horror story had not been touched. SF was the thing. Lippert distributed *Spaceways* (based on the radio serial and novel by Charles Eric Maine) with Howard Duff, while Astor picked up *Feu-*

*Sided Triangle*, a highly disappointing version of a then-popular science fiction novel, starring Barbara Payton.

It wasn't until Hammer made *The Quatermass Experiment* (U.S. RELEASE TITLE: *The Creeping Unknown*) with Brian Donlevy, and *X—The Unknown* with Dean Jagger, that it began to develop the style that would very shortly come to full bloom.

When the decision was made to take the first step into producing color features, Hammer's James Carreras and Anthony Hinds had writer Jimmy Sangster come up with a screenplay which walked familiar ground, namely the most familiar of all bogeymen, Frankenstein. To direct the production, Terence Fisher, who had already helmed several of the company's earlier releases, was signed. According to Harry Ringle's article in *Take One* magazine ("The Horrible Hammer Films of Terence Fisher") when Fisher was given four weeks to make the picture, he held out for five. What emerged was a chiller which opened the gates for Hammer's series of terror tales that would make the company the specialist in quality horror for many years. In the opinion of many, it kicked off the rash of horror films which made up the "horror craze" of the late Fifties and early Sixties.

*Curse Of Frankenstein* was very definitely a gem for Hammer. In fact, up until then, with the exception of a gag appearance in *Abbott & Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, nothing had been done regarding Mary Shelley's man-made creature for almost ten years. (Note that I refer to the Monster; Frankenstein himself and his descendants, not coun-

ting Illona Messerly in *Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man* (1943), had not seen cinematic life since *Ghost Of Frankenstein* (1942).

It is safe to say that nobody realized what would happen when *Curse* was unleashed on the public, least of all the man who was to play one of the biggest parts in its success. In his talk at the John Player Lecture Series several years later, Peter Cushing remarked: "No one connected with that first film had any idea that this incredible snowball would start and keep on rolling to this very day. It was just another picture in a list of pictures that they were going to make that year... it just struck some chord among audiences of which we are still hearing the twangs."

"Snowball" might be the proper term for what followed *Curse Of Frankenstein's* release, but in the opinion of some people, "avalanche" would be more correct.

In its initial release in Britain, *Curse* opened with a special display of the "life-giving machines" and life-size blow-up of Cushing as Baron Frankenstein about to dunk a head in a vat of acid. It also opened up a series of reviews that ripped it apart. It was one of those films that the critics seemed to hate... and the public went in droves to see.

In America, *Curse* was picked up by Warner Brothers, which opened it with some good old-fashioned hoopla: a 24 hour, around-the-clock *Scream-A-Thon*. . . constant showings of the picture at special opening theatres. Ads were dominated by an artist's drawing of the creature's head with a frightened, slip-clad girl. The catch-line—*The Curse Of Frankenstein Will Give You Nightmares Forever!* It also gave Warners sweat dreams all the way to the bank!

Besides starting Hammer on mayhem and terror, the film also made the public very aware of four people: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Terence Fisher and Jimmy Sangster.

Christopher Lee was cast as the creature (note that the billing for the film as "creature" instead of "monster" and his physical stature did help make something of an impact, assisted by Phil Leaky's makeup, which hit audiences where they lived. Viewers were convinced that the thing they were seeing was the end-product of fiction's most infamous do-it-yourself project). But it was not this role that would link him almost indelibly with the macabre. Despite a moment or two, the creature was actually a limited, very one-dimensional character, and it wouldn't be until his next role for Hammer that Lee would come into his own as Count Dracula.

When he wrote the screenplay for *Curse Of Frankenstein*, Jimmy Sangster went against the traditional ideas that had made up the screen *Frankenstein*. Instead of following the same route that resulted in the monster being called Frankenstein, Sangster went back to the source of things and took a page from Mary Shelley. The Creature was made secondary and would become the result of the plot's developments. This time the spotlight would be on Baron Frankenstein himself. But instead of following Mary Shelley's basic concept to the letter (televison would do that much later), Sangster developed an entirely new character for Frankenstein, giving him back his original name of Victor (instead of Henry of the Universal films). With *Curse*, the old viewpoint of the myth was shattered and a new concept was born.

The casting of Peter Cushing as Baron Frankenstein proved to be one of the finest moves since Boris Karloff portrayed the Monster and Bela Lugosi gleefully fanged his victims. From the beginning, Cushing brought something special to the part that, in other hands, might have come



Peter Cushing symbolizes his creation in *The Curse of Frankenstein*.

across as a "mad scientist," wiping out whoever possessed parts or knowledge he needed simply for the power and joy of killing (as well as vanity, that is an ego trip of showing everybody what a genius he is).

Cushing's Baron emerged as a man dedicated (remember that word) to the pursuit of knowledge in a time when science was still primitive. In fact, as any fan of the series realizes, Frankenstein was way ahead of his time. Cushing himself, during his appearance at the John Player Lecture Series, acknowledged this, quipping, "The strange thing is that when he first started these films back in 1956, everything that Frankenstein got up to was pretty impossible, but now Dr. Bernard has caught up. He hasn't gone quite as far as me because I have transplanted brains. Not very successfully, I admit, but we've all got to start somewhere."

Sangster's screenplay walked the line between making the Baron an out-and-out heavy and something of an anti-hero. In Cushing's able hands, Baron Frankenstein



The Monster awaits life in a world with a view

become a definite anti-hero.

Sangster's Baron Frankenstein was determined to prove his points, to go beyond the rock-bound limits of the "establishment" of his era. The fact that he's willing to use every means in his power to do so often puts him into collision with the limited thinking of the period. In the eyes of the others, this makes him a figure of evil; a monster of the human variety. In short, for the people of that time, Frankenstein "tampered with things man was not meant to know."

Dedication to Frankenstein will take hold of the Baron to the point that he seems ruthless. There is also the immense, unshakable faith that he has in his own abilities and skills, which could be mistaken by some for arrogance and tremendous ego (the latter might be correct to a degree, but that's all a matter of opinion). If you go by the results of his first two experiments, which were done with the help of assistants, it soon becomes evident why Baron Frankenstein places his faith in himself rather than others. There is a Frankenstein-as-God aspect to the story developments, as pointed out by Harry Ringle. Ringle has noted that Cushing "brings to his Frankenstein-as-God extension of the Curse Of Frankenstein character a disarming vigor which indicates that he might not do a bad job of running the Universe after all; if only people would cooperate..."

Curse Of Frankenstein's storyline was very different from previous Frankenstein pictures in that, unlike past stories, instead of beginning with the good doctor's experiments in

full swing, the film actually begins with what would have to be considered the beginning of it all (told in a flashback style with narration by Cushing's Baron from his prison cell). A young Victor, played by Melvyn Hayes, assuming the title of Baron upon his father's death, hires a tutor, one Paul Kemp (Robert Urquhart), to instruct him in practical knowledge and the sciences. It soon becomes obvious why Victor wants to hide pretty much away from the outside... mainly his relatives.

One of the worst is an aunt whose main concern is the continuing of an allowance the late Baron had doled out. She even goes so far as to try to push her daughter Elizabeth at Victor, hunting at marriage. One has the feeling that even if the old bat had an idea of the work young Frankenstein was about to begin, she'd still throw little Elizabeth to the wolves, dismembered organs and all, just so that good old "Social Security" keeps rolling in.

We follow Victor growing up, becoming the familiar figure of Cushing. As Victor matures, the originally clean-shaven Paul Kemp develops a beard. Evidently, with the growth of that beard, Paul's thinking begins to decline. He and Victor, in their experiments, bring a dead puppy back to life. His enthusiasm at the success of the project begins to falter when Frankenstein announces that he intends to go one step further before bringing their remarkable work to the attention of the medical and scientific establishment.

Sangster's screenplay builds up to the creature's "birth"...

but only when the film is a little more than half-way through the plot. Instead of focusing on the creature and a series of rampages, *Curse Of Frankenstein* follows Victor's increasing dedication (even to the point of killing an aged professor for his brilliant mind) and Paul's increasing horror at the "act against God."

During this, two new elements appear; the obligatory female interest, Elizabeth, and the more down-to-earth "sex" interest, Justine the maid.

Elizabeth is the perfect example of the terrified heroine for this sort of thing; she's pretty, trained to think in the Victorian manner and devoted to Victor, refusing to believe him capable of danger as Paul warns her. In short, she's one of those heroines who won't listen to anyone... and goes nosing about by herself.

Justine provides a good healthy dose of lust! That's right... Lust! The script has Frankenstein definitely showing that he is a human being. While he makes plans to marry Elizabeth, he's also got some action going on the side with Justine (played by Valerie Gaunt, who would display her ample physical charms as Dracula's "bride" in *Horror Of Dracula* the following year), who has plans of her own to become Mrs. Baron Frankenstein... she thinks.

In short, the moral of this little subplot is that man cannot live by playing God alone.

The pace picks up with the creature's "birth." The thing, thanks to damage wrought upon its brain by Paul when he confronts Victor by the old professor's coffin, tries to choke Frankenstein, then goes out and kills an old

man and his grandson before being shot in the head by Paul. Of course, Victor will bring the thing back to life, presenting it to a horrified Paul (after he has used it to dispose of Justine who has started to become a nuisance to Frankenstein, demanding that he marry her or else...) who is more than ready to tell all to the police. As the two men fight outside the Frankenstein house, it takes Elizabeth, with her typical (for that period... today it would be different) horror heroine's nosiness to release the creature and nearly become its victim. Victor comes to the rescue (while good old Paul runs for town and the police). It's unfortunate that he wounds Elizabeth while trying to kill the creature, but he does manage to send it plunging into a vat of acid, after setting it ablaze with a lantern.

The end finds Frankenstein (who has been telling the story in flashback) sentenced to the guillotine for the killings committed by the creature... with good old loyal Paul refusing to admit that such a being ever existed. In fact, Paul has turned into something of a villain himself; he ends up with Elizabeth while Frankenstein faces death with a less-than-enthusiastic attitude.

With this basis, the character of Baron Victor Frankenstein would develop through seven pictures. It would grow and shrink, change and expend, all according to the plot and the whim of the writer. Frankenstein would always be dedicated to his basic task and, thanks to Cushing, retain a definite spark of humanity (very evident in *Frankenstein Created Woman*).

In his first color chiller, Terence Fisher proved himself



Making a monster is just another five-finger exercise for Dr. Frankenstein.



Dr. Frankenstein and his assistant continue their missing link.

more than equal to the task. It is my opinion that in the seven films of the series, the ones directed by Fisher are probably the best of the lot. His eye for the rich, Gothic atmosphere necessary to the Hammer productions that he directed was only one of the many pluses given by film historians specializing in the macabre. Possibly one of the finest directors in the field of the fantastic, Fisher could be said, in most instances, to be able to do more with almost nothing in the way of a plot than most directors could do with a gigantic multi-level screenplay. In fact, the two failures in the Frankenstein series were directed by other hands.

Jimmy Sangster's screenplay hit upon an adult level, adding terror's first touch of out-and-out sex (for the Fil-tias), ranging from Hazel Court's low-cut gowns to Valeria Gaunt's very low nightclothes. The idea of an affair going on between the Baron and his maid was unheard of. A notable exception to this were the campy, rich "new-old melodramas" starring actor Tod Slaughter, a specialist in movie skulduggery. In most of his stories (such as *Crimes At The Dark House* or *Murder In The Red Barn*—aka *Marie Marbo*), the devilish Slaughter always had a chambermaid or unwitting innocent in his lustful paws, usually doing them in when they became (a) too annoying or (b) too pregnant.

When *Curse Of Frankenstein* made its debut, its biggest

selling point was the fact that it was the first film of its type to be done in color. It was unheard of during the Fifties and audiences were jolted by such sights as Frankenstein examining a damaged brain in a bowl or showing a pair of severed hands purchased from the local morgue attendant. In short, around 1958, this was gore deluxe for the audiences. The era of the "Splatter Film" had not yet arrived. Prior to this, color for the fantastic was aimed at such science fiction epics as *War Of The Worlds*, *This Island Earth* or *Forbidden Planet*. This was pretty strong stuff for its time... but mild in comparison to what would be unleashed on the screen.

In the final analysis, *Curse Of Frankenstein* could be looked upon as a foundation piece, not an out-and-out "classic." It is well made with Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein its strongest point as well as the concrete that holds the film together.

One gets the feeling that while Jimmy Sangster's script blazed new trails for that time, it is still cautiously feeling its way along (although audiences at the time felt that it was anything but cautious in its visual portrayals of Frankenstein's project).

It was, however, a beginning. A beginning that would, in Cushing's own words, "snowball" into the series that it became.

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# SOMETHING LURKS UNDER THE STREETS OF CHINATOWN

BY JAMES VAN HISE



**RACULA AND** Buckaroo Banzai make unlikely travelling companions, but W.D. Richter has worked with both! He wrote the 1979 version of *Buckaroo Banzai* starring Frank Langella, then later, in 1984, directed *Buckaroo Banzai*. Now Richter has produced the screenplay for the latest John Carpenter excursion into screen fantasy—this summer's upcoming *Big Trouble in Little China*. A contemporary fantasy adventure about a group of people plunged into a surreal world beneath modern Chinatown, the story was adapted from an earlier script by another writer. That author had set the tale at the turn of the century.

"When 20th Century Fox showed it to me, I felt that it needed to be made contemporary. That way, there was only one remove from reality for the audience when it goes underground," Richter explains. "But if it were a period piece and then on top of that saying that there's something under the street...I thought that it would be more immediate if I brought it up to our own period. They liked that idea. It required a complete overhaul of the script."

Since his last film was the oddball comedy fantasy *Buckaroo Banzai*, one immediately wonders how much of that style has rubbed off onto this screenplay.

"Narratively it's a much simpler endeavor. There's a single character who's pulled into something that he doesn't know anything about. We follow him through it all with his point-of-view. We don't have the flexibility, or perhaps even the liability, of cutting around to keep contact with a whole bunch of different characters. It's certainly got its outrageous aspects—the whole proposition that there's something beneath the streets that we don't know is there."

## MYSTICAL ACTIONS

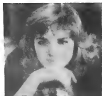
Despite the oddball title, this film is nothing like last year's controversial *Year of the Dragon*. In fact, the producers have gone to great lengths to be sure that no one will mistake it for any kind of crime thriller. What *Big Trouble in Little China* is is a mystical-action-adventure-comedy-kung fu-monster-ghost story about an imaginary world under Chinatown where ghosts lurk instead of crazed drug dealers.

Kurt Russell stars as adventurer Jack Burton. This is Russell's third movie with director John Carpenter. The film also features Dennis Dun, Kim Cattrail, Victor Wong, Kate Burton and James Hong.

The plot goes into overdrive almost from the first. Jack Burton accompanies his friend, Wang Chi (Dennis Dun) to the airport to meet Wang's new bride. When she is suddenly kidnapped right before their eyes by knife-wielding thugs, their pursuit takes them to the legendary seven hells beneath Chinatown. This strange underworld is ruled by the mysterious Lo Pan (James Hong). One of the most feared figures of Chinese mythology, he's certainly not your ordinary villain. Lo Pan was consigned to an eternal damnation of fleshless existence by the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, over 2000 years ago! Although centuries old, Lo Pan can transform himself from a wheelchair-bound old man into a youthful seven-foot-tall mystical menace.

During their rescue mission, Burton and his companions visit the Room of the Upside-Down Hell, The Honorable Hall of the Infernal Judge, The Mansion of the Disloyal, the Hell of the River of Ashes, The Spirit Path, The Iron Basin and the Great Arcade.

Sets are lavish, showing the pic-



Kate Burton



Kurt Russell



Kim Cattrail



ture's \$20 million budget. One soundstage includes a weird underground chamber with a deep pit in its center, a long passageway lined with statues of ancient armored Chinese warriors, a tunnel and other strangelooking rooms and chambers. One corridor is rigged to dump debris to simulate an earthquake while another soundstage is devoted to a huge temple set. A different one still portrays the narrow streets of a section of Chinatown. The ceiling of the set can be opened to let in natural light so that it is impossible to guess that it is actually an indoor set of a sunlit street. On screen, the illusion is perfect!

Besides the actors who encounter these special Hollywood wonders, there is also a spectacular monster—an almost indescribable creature covered with long, red hair.

## MYTH MAGIC

The film's premise is so wild you know it has to draw from life. For many years there have been legends of an underworld hidden beneath Chinatown. Investigations may have consigned such stories to fantasy, but the beliefs persist.

Screenwriter Richter did his homework in order to mix Chinese legend with Hollywood wizardry.

"I didn't really make much up," Richter claims. "I didn't feel it was necessary. Once you get three or four books and start browsing through them, there's more material than you need. I didn't make up all of the names and concepts but I did have to fit them together. I read about Chinese mythology and attempted to integrate it into my fiction while still respecting it. I can't pretend to know a lot more about the mythology than is in the screenplay. It's fun to play around with it. The Chinese themselves have conflicting mythologies. It depends on which century, which Chinese sect and so forth. This is a mixture of all their myths and legends."

Richter has displayed a marked professional interest in fantasy projects over the years. His screenplays for such films as *Silence* and the remake of *Invitation of a Body Snatcher* demonstrate his obsession with things fantastic.

"I'd like to be able to go back and forth. Hopefully I can populate the fantasy films with people you can relate to a bit more. The most important thing is

to not keep trying to work the same genres over and over again. I try to move from one kind of script to another and then double back. Three scripts later, you're writing one which has similarities to one from two years before. It's more stimulating than just taking off in the same direction and staying there."

## THE BANZAI BALLAD

One of the most controversial films of the summer of '84 was *Buckaroo Banzai*, a sly sendup of sci fi. Some people found the story by Earl Mac Rauch a bit too sly to follow. Many of the film's problems stem from neither story or style but the horrors of technology gone awry.

"It had a screwball release schedule. I don't know what people thought it was when it finally arrived. Some towns got it when they could read reviews; others six months later with virtually no campaign prepping them for it. The posters didn't capture the flavor of the movie. A lot of people were lured in who would never like it; others didn't go who might have liked it. It seems to elicit either an impassioned 'You gotta' see this movie!' or a 'What the heck was it?' response. As a filmmaker, you have to make things that are a bit challenging. I think we needed clearer marketing to find the real audience."

When I pointed out that many audiences have complained of garbled sound, Richter pointed out that this was due to a peculiarity of theatrical screenings. Videotapes and cable do not suffer from the problem.

"The studio made only Dolby prints," Richter reveals. "And they played a lot of mono houses—which doesn't work! You lose dialogue. It was a major battle in distribution but it was futile because no mono prints exist. I had a screaming and yelling phase: 'Put them in Dolby houses!' It's a technological nightmare. Our sound mix was crystal clear."

*Buckaroo* lives on in midnight screenings, home video and foreign release. There is persistent talk of a sequel.

"There's a groundswell of enthusiasm for the fan club. It grows by a hundred a week. The film is getting distribution in Europe right now. It's being received as a new movie and get-

ting good reviews. There are a lot of people who keep buying with the idea of buying sequel rights from Sherwood Productions. But it doesn't seem to know what it wants to do with it," notes Richter.

(Sherwood Productions owns the rights as 20th Century Fox was only the American distributor.)

"ABC wanted to do an hour-long prime time special," Richter continues. "We were all going to do it—all the people who created the film, but Sherwood wouldn't go along with it. It's confusing to say the least. More confusing than the plot of the movie!"

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

John Carpenter directed *Dark Star*, *Christine*, *Star Man* and *The Thing* as well as *Halloween*. But even with such an honor roll of genre films to his credit, Richter's *Big Trouble* still represents a departure for him.

"I suppose it is," Richter admits. "I hope we see his very natural instinct for creating tension and exploring what's going on in dark corners and down long hallways—making you jump clear to the ceiling. I think there's ample opportunity for that in *Big Trouble*."

With all the furor that surrounded last summer's *Year of the Dragon*, Richter is adamant in assuring that his film is not even remotely similar. The title could mislead some into believing otherwise. It is an unfortunate case where one film's title coincided with something completely different being done by someone else.

"You can drive yourself nuts when you're writing, trying to figure out what everybody else is doing. You can't possibly be aware of everything out there. It doesn't resemble *Year of the Dragon* in any way. People will have to understand that from the publicity and the advertising campaign."

How would the screenwriter sum up *Big Trouble*? Is it something like Indiana Jones? Tongue-in-cheek? Comedy-adventure?

"Comedy-adventure," assesses Richter. "I hope there's not a tongue-in-cheek quality about it. You can't get jeopardy if you're pretending it's all just a joke. It better be scary. Then you laugh as a way of releasing the tension. It's so outrageously large that the only appropriate response is a quick laugh. And then get out of there!"



On the set of Cameron's newest excursion into fantasy.



The torches beckon.







**DECAPITRON** —SEE PAGE 42

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